

LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1-13 (Canceled).

Claim 14 (Currently Amended) A method of communication ~~as set forth in claim 13~~
between an information providing apparatus and a user apparatus, comprising steps of:

initially generating a request for information at an information providing apparatus
from the user apparatus, the initial request not identifying the user apparatus;

transferring the initial request not identifying the user apparatus from the information
providing apparatus to an information relaying apparatus;

sending information related to the request and a user identifier identifying the user
apparatus from the user apparatus to the information relaying apparatus after the transferring
step;

generating a customer number based on the user identifier at the information relaying
apparatus;

sending the information related to the request and the customer number to the
information providing apparatus from the information relaying apparatus;

the information providing apparatus requesting the information relaying apparatus to
establish a communication path between the information providing apparatus and the user
apparatus after the the information providing apparatus receives the information and customer
number sent by the information relaying apparatus; and

establishing the requested communication path between the information providing

apparatus and the user apparatus, wherein

said user apparatus accesses a web page provided by the information providing apparatus through a network and uses a predetermined object for initially requesting said information provided in the web page so as to initially request said information from the information providing apparatus, and

said predetermined object inputs input information relating to the request in a first state that cannot be viewed by said information providing apparatus and transfers the input information to said information relaying apparatus in a second state that cannot be viewed by said information providing apparatus.

Claim 15 (Canceled)

Claim 16 (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method of communication as set forth in claim [[13]] 14, wherein said user identifier includes one or both of an IP address and telephone number of the user apparatus.

Claim 17 (Canceled)

Claim 18 (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method of communication as set forth in claim [[13]] 14, wherein said information providing apparatus searches for a person suitable for responding to said information related to the request based on said information related to the request and notifies said information related to the request to the person.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method of communication as set forth in claim [[13]] 14, wherein

said information providing apparatus requests, by telephone, communication by voice as said requested communication path; and

said information relaying apparatus secures a voice communication path between said information providing apparatus and said user apparatus as said requested communication path.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method of communication as set forth in claim ~~[[13]]~~ 14, wherein

said information providing apparatus requests, by telephone to the information relaying apparatus, communication by voice as said requested communication path; and

said information relaying apparatus requests a real time voice communication path between said information providing apparatus and said user apparatus as said requested communication path.

Claims 21-40 (Canceled).

Claim 41 (Currently Amended) The method of communication as set forth in claim 14, further comprising:

storing identification information comprising the request, the user identifier, and the customer number at the information relaying apparatus.

Claim 42 (New) The method of communication as set forth in claim 14, further comprising detecting the identification information and identifying the user apparatus based on said identification information and said customer number received from said information

providing apparatus.

Claim 43 (New) The method of communication as set forth in claim 14, further comprising:

storing and analyzing a plurality of requests from the user apparatus.

Claim 44 (New) The method of communication as set forth in claim 43, wherein said storing the plurality of requests includes storing time information relating to a time of occurrence of each of the plurality of requests, and said analyzing analyzes said time information using the time as an indicator.

Claim 45 (New) The method of communication as set forth in claim 14, wherein the communication path includes a network, a telephone line, a network telephone function through a network, or any combination thereof.